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[redacted] 25X1

1. On 26 October 1954, a confidential meeting was held by the Committee for German Unity. This meeting was attended by the chairmen of GDR political parties and the editors-in-chief of GDR newspapers. Walter Ulbricht, on this occasion, spoke on the tasks of the political parties and the press. In his speech, Ulbricht stated that it was the mission of the political parties and of the National Front to discuss, in small circles, the events of the recent general elections. Ulbricht admitted that the population, in this respect, had voiced concerns which must not be overlooked. Much of the criticism voiced was justified. On the other hand, it must be considered that some people had suddenly indulged in a dangerous inclination of blackening everything that lent itself to criticism. This tendency toward negative criticism had increased after the elections because the population had not understood the character of the democratic election procedure. This could only happen because the political parties had utterly neglected their duties in the re-education of certain bourgeois circles. Moreover, these parties had put up with ideological shortcomings which formed a hotbed for hostile propaganda. Ulbricht stated that it was inadvisable to discuss these problems in public at the present moment. It would, therefore, be incorrect tactics to deal with this situation in the press. The most urgent task of the press was to show the German population, on the basis of the situation prevailing in West Germany, how right the policies of the GDR Government are.

2. Ulbricht then proceeded to criticize the GDR press. He stated that every careful reader could not help but feel that GDR newspapers were run by nincompoops. Ulbricht referred to the imminent elections in West Berlin, Hesse, and Bavaria. These elections, according to him, offered a chance of pointing out the fundamental difference between general elections in East and West Germany with regard to both the electoral procedure and the selection of candidates. Rarely did it happen, however, that a newspaper [redacted] notice on these elections in West Ge[redacted]. The government coalition was endan[redacted] by [redacted] rifle. [redacted]

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of a state of emergency. No information whatsoever appeared on these affairs in the GDR press. Editors of newspapers completely failed to realize the great line in politics. The moment was very propitious for an overthrow of Adenauer's government but nothing was done by the newspapers to incite public indignation against the West German Chancellor and give the signal for a concentrated attack against his rule. The occasional reproduction of articles published by the SED press service was completely inadequate. The GDR population wanted to be appealed to by men whom they know in person. The editors-in-chief of newspapers must, therefore, be aware of their vital mission at this juncture and should nourish the indignation of the population against reaction and fan its enthusiasm in the fight for the re-unification of Germany.

[redacted] Comment. Ulbricht's speech is significant because it reveals the contrast between the official propaganda of co-existence and the actual political tactics which have not changed since recently. These contrasts have become more acute after the general elections of 17 October 1954. 25X1

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